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THE MONTHLY GULL BULLETIN

Volume 37 Berkeley, California, April, 1955 Number 4

FEBRUARY TRIP TO RITCHIE RANCH

Sunday, February 6, was a perfect winter day—clear, no wind, and no tule fog in the delta area. Several flocks of white-fronted geese and one of whistling swans were seen along the road east of Isleton. The group of 46 members and guests which met at The Rodeo between Terminous and Lodi proceeded north under the leadership of Dr. T. Eric Reynolds, then turned west on the second road and drove to the Ritchie Ranch near the dead end. In the morning a circuit hike was taken south of the road, through fields where hundreds of cranes were feeding. After lunch another circuit hike was taken to the levee north of the road. A number of dead swans were in the fields nearby, believed to be victims of botulism or lead poisoning. On the way home a part of the group returned by the first road west to the north of The Rodeo. At the marsh on the north side of the road just east of the bridge just east of the north end of Garden Road, a Virginia Rail and a Florida Gallinule were seen. The writer has almost invariably seen one or two rails at this spot.

The following 58 species were recorded: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Whistling Swan, Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Shoveller, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, White-tailed Kite, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk (2), Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant (dozens), Sandhill Crane (estimated 2000, including several of the much smaller Little Brown Cranes), Virginia Rail, Florida Gallinule, Coot, Killdeer, Long-billed Curlew, Greater Yellow-legs, Ring-billed Gull, Burrowing Owl, Short-eared Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-shafted Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Horned Lark, Scrub Jay, Crow, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Mockingbird, Robin, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Orange-crowned Warbler, Audubon Warbler, House Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer Blackbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Lesser Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Lincoln Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

— A. LAURENCE CURL, *Historian.*

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF FUTURE FIELD TRIPS

Sun., May 8 — Santa Rosa area, or Howell Mt. & Pope Valley.
Sat., May 21 — Mt. Diablo.
Sun., May 22 — Boat trip (see back page)
Sun., June 12 — Santa Cruz Mountains and coast.
Sat., June 25 — Land's End and Golden Gate Park.
Sat.-Sun., July 16-17 — Sierra Nevada (or July 2-4 if preferred; let the field trips chairman know.)
Sat., July 30 — Moss Landing.

— HOWARD L. COGSWELL, *Field Trips Chairman.*

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE KILLS HOUSE SPARROW

On Jan. 19 just as dusk was beginning to settle a female House Sparrow, which had been in the vicinity for some weeks and seemed to be diseased and rather slow-flying, alighted on the feeding tray. Immediately a Loggerhead Shrike flew down and pursued the sparrow to the ground near the tray. It

would seize the sparrow and strike it with its beak, also seeming to beat it against the ground and rocks. At intervals the shrike would hop up on a small rock or commanding piece of ground and survey the area. This only took a moment and then it would attack the sparrow again. Finally, the sparrow's struggles having ceased, the shrike seized its prey in its beak and actually flew with it to an oak tree some 250 feet distant although the sparrow was so bulky that I would have guessed the feat impossible.

— HARRY C. ADAMSON.

CROW ROOST NEAR BRENTWOOD

While driving on the highway between Brentwood and Marsh Creek, Contra Costa County, at about 4:15 on the afternoon of Jan. 31 during a mild rainfall, I observed an unusual concentration of Crows. A flock of about 150 were first observed flying from the northwest toward the walnut grove nearest the turn into Marsh Creek Road. A closer inspection of the grove and the adjacent freshly plowed field showed a vast flock of settled birds to be present. These were on the ground and clinging to the trees. An estimate of 3000 birds was made and fresh flocks of a few dozen to several hundred were in the air and augmenting those already present as they descended. The writer believes this to be an extraordinary concentration as nowwhere previously in California during daylight hours has he seen more than a few at a time.

— ARTHUR S. CAMPBELL.

OBSERVATIONS. WHITE PELICAN: 3 aloft near Twin Peaks, San Francisco, Dec. 27 (Edward A. Sibley); WHISTLING SWAN: 8 flying over Seal Rocks, San Francisco, Dec. 27 (Walter Fitzpatrick); 7 at Bodega Bay, Jan. 2 (Gordon L. Bolander); WOOD DUCK: Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, Jan. 1 (GLB); 15 on small lake off Uvas Dam road south of Alamaden, Jan. 16 (Paul Opler and Harry Adamson); HOODED MERGANSER: Male, Sacramento Refuge, Jan. 1 (GLB); female, Salmon Creek, Sonoma County, Jan. 2 (GLB); PIGEON HAWK: two miles east of Watsonville, Jan. 15 (HA); SANDHILL CRANE: 16 west of Williams, Jan. 1 (GLB); FLORIDA GALLINULE, near mouth of Salmon Creek, Sonoma County, Jan. 2 (GLB); ALLEN HUMMINGBIRD: at least 3 at Golden Gate Park, Fuchsia Gardens, Dec. 20 (Hans Meinhardt); PILEATED WOODPECKER: Taylor State Park, Marin County, Nov. 13 (Carlyle Sather); VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW: St. Mary's College, Feb. 21 (A. S. Campbell); ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW, St. Mary's College, Mar. 9 (ASC); ROBIN: albino, all feathers a pale gray, El Cerrito, Dec. 25 to Jan. 1 (A. L. Curl); ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: St. Mary's College, Feb. 6 (ASC); AUDUBON WARBLER: with large protuberance on upper mandible, Feb. 4 to Mch. 10, El Cerrito (ALC); SLATE-COLORED JUNCO: 2, banded Dec. 22 and Jan. 5, Santa Rosa Ave., Berkeley (Russell Pray); WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Juanita Way, San Francisco, Oct. 30 to Dec. 28 and later (Bradley S. Sibley).

AUDUBON CAMP OF CALIFORNIA. At Sugar Bowl Lodge near Donner Summit: June 26-July 9; July 10-23; July 24-Aug. 6; Aug. 7-20; and August 21-September 3. Further information may be obtained from the California Office (address on back page); the fee this year will be $95. For information about the 6 half-fee camperships to be awarded by the Golden Gate Audubon Society see the March Gull, page 11.

An unusual feature of the new book FLORIDA BIRD LIFE, by Alexander Sprunt, Jr., is that the meaning of the Latin generic, specific and sub-specific names is given.

TIME, for March 7, 1955, has a full-page advertisement "A Salute to the National Audubon Society" put out by the Sinclair Oil Company.

The October, 1954, issue of THE AUK (pages 366-412.) contained an article by Gordon W. Gullion, "The Reproductive Cycle of American Coots in California". This study was particularly concerned with Jewel Lake and Lake Temescal.

Dr. T. Eric Reynolds was re-elected President of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Society, and A. Laurence Curl was re-elected Second Vice-President.

APRIL MEETING

The 451st regular meeting of the Golden Gate Audubon Society will be held on Thursday, April 14, at 7:30 in the Assembly Room of the Main Library, Civic Center, San Francisco (McAllister and Larkin). Mr. Kenneth D. Morrison, editor of Audubon Magazine and Director of Public Information for the National Audubon Society, will speak on the topic "Fifty Years of Audubon Progress", and he will show a film called "Marsh Waters - Waste or Wealth," by the well-known naturalist-photographer, Dr. W. J. Breckenridge. This will be an especially fine program. Come and bring a friend.

— Mrs. Budd J. Smith, *Program Chairman.*

FEBRUARY TRIP TO GRASS VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

Approximately 10 cars full of bold birders turned out on the gray ominous morning of February 26 for the group's first visit to Grass Valley Regional Park. Rain started falling just as the group assembled, so plans were immediately changed as Grass Valley trails can be mighty muddy. Upper San Leandro Reservoir and St. Mary's Lake were explored until about 11 when rain drove even the most intrepid ones home. The following 32 species composed the list: Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, American Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Calif. Quail, Coot, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Red-shafted Flicker, Black Phoebe, Steller Jay, Scrub Jay, Bewick Wren, Robin, Varied Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Western Bluebird, Audubon Warbler, Western Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer Blackbird, House Finch, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco, White-crowned Sparrow and Fox Sparrow.

— Lee Stallcup, *Leader and Historian.*

CONDENSED TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1954

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

Balance in commercial account January 1, 1954	$ 4,905.15
Receipts in 1954	3,829.84
Total	8,734.99
Cash paid out (expenditures)	4,127.22
Balance in commercial account	$ 4,607.77

TOTAL ASSETS:

Commercial account	$ 4,607.77
Savings account	73.59
U. S. Treasury Bond	490.00
Total	$ 5,171.36

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership in force January 1, 1954	510
Membership in force December 31, 1954	685

Harold G. Peterson, *Treasurer.*

NEW MEMBERS: We welcome the following: from San Francisco, Miss Marcella Leonard, Edward Schuster, Lloyd Stevenson, Mrs. Ruth E. Sudholt, Miss Nancy C. Williams; from Oakland, Tim Newcomb; from Berkeley, Gerald F. Brewer, Charles Caton, Homer J. Foote, Mrs. Grace S. Forbes, Mrs. Lawrence W. Larson; from Richmond, Miss Helen M. Clark, Robert G. Mansfield; from San Rafael, Tracy W. Harron; from Healdsburg, Elmer P. Kayser.

SCREEN TOUR LECTURE. The last lecture of the 1954 - 55 series will be on Monday, April 11, Olin Sewall Pettingill, "Tip o' the Mitten," Berkeley High School Little Theatre at 8 p.m.

COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY. The 1955 Annual Meeting of the Cooper Society will be held at Asilomar Thursday and Friday, April 21 and 22, with field trips on Saturday, April 23, including an ocean boat trip.

FIELD TRIPS FOR APRIL

On Saturday, April 16, to BAY FARM ISLAND and MILLS COLLEGE, starting from Santa Clara Ave. and High St. in Alameda at 7 a.m. with

shore-bird concentrations as the first goal. The tide will be starting to ebb, making this the best time for seeing shorebirds close-up. The date should be close to the peak of the migration of some plovers and sandpipers, some of which will be in breeding plumage. At about 11, the scene will shift to Mills College, where during and after a picnic lunch, a good variety of land birds can be found. Late comers who wish to join the group here should wait on Richards Road just within the campus entrance off MacArthur Blvd. Leader, Howard L. Cogswell, TR. 3-6419.

On Sunday, April 24, to ALUM ROCK PARK, East of San Jose, and the canyon north of nearby CALAVERAS RESERVOIR. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Junior Museum in Alum Rock Park, which can be reached by driving east on Alum Rock Ave. from U.S. 101 Bypass. The distance from San Francisco is 53 miles, from Oakland 46 miles. A variety of woodland, chaparral, sage-brush and grassland areas will be covered. White-throated Swifts, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Canyon Wrens, Dippers and Golden Eagles are resident here; migrant vireos, warblers, tanagers and others should be present. After lunch in the park, a tour by auto caravan of appropriate foothill and canyon areas between Sunol and Calaveras Reservoir, where the more open woodland has Yellow-billed Magpies, Western Kingbirds, etc., and Alameda Creek has Wood Ducks, will be held. Bring binoculars, lunch and interested friends. Leaders: Peter Veitch and Charles Hines.

SPECIAL BOAT TRIP FOR OCEAN BIRDS

An all-day chartered boat trip from Berkeley Yacht Harbor to SE Farallen Island has been tentatively arranged for Sunday, May 22. Those wishing to participate should send their name, address, phone number and $7 fare to Howard L. Cogswell, Box 486, Mills College, Oakland 13. Names of paid applicants will be placed on a passenger list in the order received. A minimum of 12 paid by April 15 is necessary in order to contract for the boat. A maximum of 22 is permissible. After contracting for the boat, refunds of fare can be made only if the trip is cancelled because of severe weather (small craft warnings out), or by replacements from any waiting list of applicants. The boat is the 50-feet Privateer with 2-way radio and experienced skipper. Departure at 6 a.m., DST, from the pier by Harbormaster's office, Berkeley. Expected return time, 5 to 6 p.m. No landing possible on the island but nesting Murres, Western Gulls, Brandt and Pelagic Cormorants can be seen from the boat, as well as Pigeon Guillemots and probably Cassin Auklets and Tufted Puffins. En route a trip at this date should enable us to see thousands of sooty shearwaters, and fewer of other shearwaters, and possible black-footed albatrosses. There can be no guarantee of smooth water (it is often rough), but modern seasickness preventatives work well for most people. Complete information will be mailed to enrolled passengers.

Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.

Established January 25, 1917

President.....Dr. Albert Boles,.....854 Longridge Road, Oakland 10, GL. 1-6267
Vice President.....Howard L. Cogswell....Box 486, Mills College, Oakland 13, TR. 3-6419
Vice President.....Mrs. George C. Browne.....2435 Ivy Drive, Oakland 6, TW. 3-5469
Treasurer.....Harold G. Peterson.....3548 - 65th Ave., Oakland 5, LO. 8-7534
Rec. Secretary.....Mrs. Albert E. Long....45 Clarendon Ave., San Francisco 14, LO. 4-7767
Cor. Secretary.....Miss Minnie H. Young.....2726 Prince Street, Berkeley 5, HU. 3-3180
Director.....Dr. T. Eric Reynolds.....140 Estates Drive, Piedmont 11, AN. 1-7121
Director.....Edward A. Sibley.....229 Juanita Way, San Francisco 27, LO. 4-2046
Director.....Arthur J. Bennett.....836 Mills Ave., San Bruno, JU. 8-6702
Membership
Chairman.....Mrs. Dorothy Dean Scott....1508 La Loma Ave., Berkeley 8, AS. 3-1253
Editor.....A. Laurence Curl.....751 Balra Drive, El Cerrito 8, LA. 6-7004

Changes of Address should be sent to the Corresponding Secretary.

Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint Membership, Local and National $5.00 per year, includes AUDUBON MAGAZINE. Local Membershi only, $1.50 per year.
Branch of NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, California Office — 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4 — TH. 8-4042